

Message

From: "Shoren Brown, Trout Unlimited" ["Shoren Brown, Trout Unlimited" <sbrown@tu.org>]
Sent: 12/18/2012 7:00:06 PM
To: Bill Dunbar/R10/USEPA/US@EPA
Subject: Bristol Bay: 2012 in Review
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As 2012 comes to a close, we bring you a brief year in review.

This has been a momentous year for Bristol Bay. In May, the EPA released its 338-page Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment, examining the impacts of large-scale mining to the region's clean waters and fisheries. The report found that even without multiple spills or a disaster, digging up the Pebble deposit would destroy up to 87 miles of salmon bearing streams and up to 4,300 acres of salmon wetland habitat. The agency followed up with a series of eight hearings, including six in the region, all featuring strong turnout and impassioned testimony. In total, more than 2,200 people attended the hearings, and more than 80 percent expressed opposition to Pebble mine and support for the EPA's report. Support in the region was even higher at 93+%.

The EPA then conducted a scientific peer review of its report by 12 outside experts selected by an independent contractor. Many of the panelists found that EPA underestimated the risks of the Pebble project, including tailings dam failure, and operational leaks and spills. Their comments are being incorporated into the Assessment, as are the public comments submitted by more than 150,000 groups and individuals. The report is expected to be finalized in the first few months of 2013.

Fishermen and groups across the country banded together in the Commercial Fishermen for Bristol Bay network, garnering support across the country for protection of Bristol Bay's fishing jobs and industry. More than 850 hunting, fishing and outdoors groups from across the country sent a letter to President Obama urging protection of Bristol Bay.

In addition, Anglo American – the bigger of the Pebble mine backers – experienced a tumultuous year of strikes, labor unrest and violence at its South African platinum and gold mines, eventually leading to the resignation of its CEO.

The coalition to protect Bristol Bay continues to grow nationally and in Alaska, and is pushing Congress and the Administration to support action under section 404c of the Clean Water Act, to protect Bristol Bay, one of most productive, economically beneficial waters in the United States.

For more information, visit www.savebristolbay.org.

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